Casualty figures for the latter part of 2002 are subject to minor modification on review :

(c) and (d) A comperehensive welfare package has been worked out and implemented for the next of kin of those killed in enemy/terrorist action. Payment of dues is a continuing process and all benefits as applicable to the next of kin of deceased soliders are being paid on completion of necessary documentation and on meeting of legal requirements. Payment of dues has been completed in respect of 514 casualties of Kargil Conflict and about 1200 NOKs of casualties thereafter.

Project 75 of Naval Submarine Design Bureau

782. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Naval Submarine Design Bureau has launched its Project 75; and

(b) if so, the details of its target alongwith the estimated expenses per unit and the timeframe set for its completion?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b). Government have approved a long term perspective plan for indigenous construction of submarines and acquisition of national competence in submarine building. Project 75 is part of this plan. Mazagon Docks Limited (MDL) Mumbai has been identified as the yard to ultimately construct French designed Scorpene Submarines on successful completion of negotiations with the French Company. However, no final decision on the proposal has been taken.

Defence Cooperation with Laos

783. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to step up defence cooperation with Laos; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b). During the visit of Prime Minister to Laos in November 2002, an Agreement on Defence Cooperation was signed between India and Laos. This Agreement will provide the institutional framework for greater cooperation between the two countries, in defence related matters.